

Message Text

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ACTION FBO-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 A-01 SY-05 /018 W

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R 111722Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1013

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 2841

SANTO DOMINGO FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ABLD AFSP HA

SUBJ: SITE FOR PROPOSED NEW CONSULAR BUILDING

1. DURING NOV 5 CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS, I ASKED WHETHER GOVT HAD COMPLETED ITS EXAMINATION OF PROPOSED LAND LEASE FOR NEW CONSULAR BUILDING TRANSMITTED IN OUR NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 9.

2. BRUTUS SAID THAT MAYOR OF PORT AU PRINCE HERARD WAS STRONGLY OPPOSING LEASE AND HAD EXPRESSED HIS OBJECTIONS IN LETTER TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER. DECISION WAS NOW UP TO PRESIDENT. BRUTUS SAID HERARD HAD ORIGINALLY TOLD BRUTUS HE HAD NO OBJECTIONS BUT THEN, WITHOUT INFORMING BRUTUS, HAD REVERSED HIMSELF.

3. I SAID THAT EARLY DECISION WOULD BE HELPFUL IN VIEW OF OUR PLANNING CYCLE. BRUTUS SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO MOVE MATTER FORWARD.

4. AFTERWARDS, REFLECTING ON THIS CONVERSATION, I SOUGHT TO ANALYZE POSSIBLE REASONS FOR MAYOR HERARD'S OPPOSITION. ACCOMPANIED BY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, I WALKED OVER THE PROPOSED SITE AGAIN. FROM URBAN PLANNING VIEWPOINT, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT A TWO-STORY BUILDING OF 4400 SQUARE FEET BASE AREA WOULD APPRECIABLY CONSTRICT OPEN PARK AREA BETWEEN LEGISLATIVE PALACE AND WATERFRONT AND WOULD INTERRUPT SYMMETRY

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OF UNITED NATIONS SQUARE, BUILT FOR 1949 BICENTENNIAL OF

PORT AU PRINCE. IT WOULD PROMINENTLY EXTEND THE AMERICAN PRESENCE INTO A CENTRAL (IF NOW SOMEWHAT DILAPIDATED) PUBLIC RECREATION AREA. ALTHOUGH OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE FRIENDLY NOW, A MODEST AMERICAN PROFILE HERE AS IN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS MUCH TO COMMEND IT.

5. ADMIN OFFICER AND I THEN PACED OFF ABOVE BASE AREA DIMENSIONS ON THE TRIANGULAR SHAPED AREA TO REAR OF CHANCERY AND EXAMINED FBO SITE PLAN. DESPITE ITS IRREGULAR SHAPE, DIMENSIONS OF SITE ARE SUCH THAT PROPOSED CONSULAR ANNEX COULD EASILY BE ACCOMMODATED EVEN USING FORM OF SIMPLE RECTANGLE. LONG WAITING LINES COULD BE HANDLED LESS CONSPICUOUSLY USING ENTRANCE FROM STREET TO REAR OF CHANCERY, AWAY FROM WATERFRONT AND PARK AREA. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN CONSULATE AND CHANCERY WOULD BE FACILITATED. IN SUM, PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH USING OUR OWN SITE APPEARED LESS THAN THOSE WHICH WOULD FLOW FROM ERECTING BUILDING ON LAND LEASED FROM GOVT.

6. SINCE PLANNING FOR CONSULATE BUILDING BEGAN, WE HAVE GIVEN RENEWED ATTENTION TO IMPROVING SECURITY PROTECTION AFFORDED PUBLIC ACCESS AREAS (STATE 210312, PAUP 2804). I BELIEVE RSO WOULD CONCUR THAT OUR CONTROL OVER FUTURE CONSULAR ANNEX WOULD BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE IF BUILDING WERE LOCATED WITHIN EXISTING PERIMETER RATHER THAN ACROSS THE STREET AT DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 300 FEET FROM MARINE SECURITY GUARD POST.

7. FURTHER FACTOR IS PROSPECT OF ADDITIONAL PLANNING DELAY WHILE CONTENDING GOVT AUTHORITIES DEBATE PROPOSED LEASE, AS AGAINST OUR ABILITY TO MOVE AHEAD IMMEDIATELY IF OUR EXISTING SITE WERE SELECTED.

8. FINALLY, ASSUMING OUR OWN SITE IS JUDGED ADEQUATE, OUR GRACEFUL WITHDRAWAL FROM LEASE REQUEST WOULD HAVE MODEST POLITICAL ADVANTAGES; E.G., DEMONSTRATE OUR RESPECT FOR THE CAPITAL'S URBAN PLANNING NEEDS, RELIEVE BRUTUS FROM NEED TO BE OUR ADVOCATE ON WHAT HAS BECOME A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE (THUS SPARING HIM FOR MORE SUBSTANTIVE ADVOCACY IN FUTURE), AND REMOVE BASIS FOR ANY ILLUSORY HAITIAN QUID PRO QUO EXPECTATIONS.

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9. ACTION REQUESTED: TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FOREGOING ARCHITECTURAL, URBAN PLANNING, SECURITY, AND POLITICAL FACTORS, I REQUEST THAT FBO REEXAMINE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING SITE AT REAR OF CHANCERY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED NEW CONSULATE AND LET ME HAVE ITS VIEWS. I WOULD APPRECIATE IN PARTICULAR FBO COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE DESIGN OPTIONS APPROPRIATE TO EXISTING SITE.
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